



Klytemnestra - the original subversive female

— a chamber opera in five scenes, for voice, viola, piano, dancer and narrator —

Music by Dominick DiOrio. Libretto by Misha Penton

A note from Misha...

Klytemnestra is based on Greek playwright, Aeschylus' work, *Agamemnon* (458 BC), and is one of three plays comprising his trilogy, *The Oresteia*, telling the tragic familial events of the House of Atreus. Composer, Dominick DiOrio has set my words to music, and they wriggle from inky scribbles on a page into the soaring vocal embodiment of, arguably, the most influential and subversive Greek Heroine in all of the Greek plays: Klytemnestra. She stands against the polis, against the emerging male-ordered, linear, dualistic state; against the forming patriarchy that will define our culture (for women and men) for thousands of years after her time. She possesses the inherent potential of subversive expressivity in body, voice and word, and thus the power to entirely restructure the male paradigm of society. Her murder of Agamemnon is a symbolic rejection of Order and an embrace of Chaos - a metaphoric release from the confining limitation of societal acquiescence to power-over.

***Klytemnestra's* five scenes:**

Prologue/Scene 1: Obsession: Klytemnestra is Queen of Mycenae. Her husband, the Trojan War hero Agamemnon, has sacrificed their daughter, Iphigenia, to secure his victory in war, and has been at battle for ten years. In Agamemnon's absence, Klytemnestra paces the halls, ruling and haunting the palace with her grief.

Scene 2: Deception/Attraction: As signal fires light the hills, heralding the Greek victory over the Trojans, Klytemnestra awaits her husband's return.

Scene 3: Weaving Aria: Empowerment: Agamemnon returns and Klytemnestra lays the sacred tapestries of the House of Atreus at his feet. She invites him to walk upon them, entrapping him in a curse.

Scene 4: Iphigenia's Song: Klytemnestra remembers her daughter, Iphigenia, and her grief fuels the seduction of Agamemnon.

Scene 5: Klytemnestra murders Agamemnon in his bath. Her deed does not quell her grief over the loss of her daughter, Iphigenia. Ultimately, their son, Orestes, will return to avenge his father.

Klytemnestra's creation was inspired by Dr. John Harvey. Many thanks to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and to Margaret Mims, Amanda Waldman, and the staff of the MFAH. Special thanks to Dave Nickerson, Lois Alba, and Raul Cesares.



Misha Penton, soprano, artistic director, concept, libretto

Misha Penton is a contemporary opera and classical singer, theater-media artist, librettist, song lyricist and poet. Her diverse performing career includes opera, concert and multidisciplinary performance projects. She has collaborated with and sung world premieres by composers Elliot Cole, Dominick DiOrio, James D. Norman, Roger Keele, and Ofer Ben-Amots. She is the founder, artistic director and lead ensemble artist of Houston's multi-arts performance ensemble, Divergence Vocal Theater. www.mishapenton.com

Dominick DiOrio, composer

Dominick DiOrio just finished three years as director of choral activities and associate professor of music at Lone Star College-Montgomery. Starting this Fall, he will be Assistant Professor of Music on the conducting faculty at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. He was named "Best Composer 2011" by HoustonPress for his new opera, *Klytemnestra*, with Divergence Vocal Theater. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts in choral conducting from the Yale School of Music in May 2012. He has also received the MMA and MM in choral conducting from Yale and a BM in composition from Ithaca College. His work is published with Alliance, Lorenz and Oxford. www.dominickdiorio.com



Meredith Harris, viola

Meredith Harris, a native of North Carolina, currently lives in Houston, TX where she enjoys performing and teaching. Meredith received her Bachelors of Music degree from East Carolina University with Ara Gregorian and graduated from Rice University with her Masters of Music in viola performance with James Dunham. As a freelance musician Meredith has enjoyed performing with various ensembles including the Houston Symphony, Houston Ballet, Houston Grand Opera, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Aperio, and the Houston Chamber Choir. She is a founding member of Quartus Chamber Players (established in the summer of 2010). Summer festival performances include Tanglewood, Grand Teton Music Festival, Spoleto, Kennedy Center, Four Seasons Next Generation Concert Series, Las Vegas Music Festival, and North Carolina School of the Arts Summer Program. www.quartuschamberplayers.com



Kyle Evans, piano

Kyle Evans has been heard on KUHA's The Front Row, and venues such as The Rothko Chapel, The Miller Outdoor, The MFAH, and The Sage Theatre in NYC. He has performed with Houston Grand Opera's *Opera to Go!* and in numerous school productions and churches as guest artist. Also known for frequent premieres and thoughtful interpretations of new music, in a recent performance with Divergence Vocal Theater, The Houston Press said he played "with rich insight and emotional wallop." Kyle earned a B.M. from Oklahoma City University where he was winner of the school's concerto competition and MM from Rice University where he was a pupil of Brian Connelly.



Meg Brooker, dancer & choreography

Meg Brooker is a multidisciplinary performing artist and choreographer whose background ranges from Isadora Duncan dance (Lori Belilove & Company) to avant-garde theatre (Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysterical Theatre). Credits include numerous New York City venues as well as international festivals in Moscow, Amsterdam, Vienna, and Ukraine. She holds an MFA in Performance as Public Practice from UT Austin and a BA in Theatre Studies from Yale. www.mb-arts.com



Shelley Auer, narrator

Shelley Auer's recent performances include roles in *Gone Missing*, Theater Lab; *Camelot*, Unity Theater; *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, Texas Repertory; *Company*, Etc Theater; and *Sweeney Todd*, Stafford Theater. She has also performed leading roles with Divergence Vocal Theater, Opera Vista, Opera in the Heights and Houston Grand Opera's *Opera to Go!*. She has been a member of Houston Grand Opera chorus for 7 seasons. In addition to Kim Tobin's acting studio, Miss Auer studied music and acting at Baylor University and Neighborhood Playhouse Summer program.

